

will be more rubber products and that will give employment for in organised sector. Growing of natural rubber will be in the private sector.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHLA: The rubber growers in Kerala are facing a grave situation. Now the Minister has mentioned about the prices. I would like to know the present position of the cost study done for the natural rubber for increasing the prices.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, the last study was done by the Cost Accounts Branch of the Finance Ministry and the revised prices of rubber were announced on the 15th of January 1991, about 11 months ago. I have already directed that the data should be gathered and another study should be done. As soon as the next study is completed, we will consider about revising the prices of rubber.

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR: What we understand from the answer given by the Minister is, we must have enough stock of rubber to enter the competitive export market. In my constituency of Mangalore in Sullia Taluk, the Government it self owns rubber plantation and the entire South Canara district is fit to be encouraged to grow more and more rubber.

So, I would like to know from the Minister whether the Government thinks of encouraging growing more and more rubber in this area so that we grow more rubber and enter the competitive export market.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, we have to grow more rubber. But our rubber must be competitive in the world market. If we grow costly rubber or our rubber costs more than the international rubber, we cannot export to the world market.

The problem today is not technology. The problem is the high cost of rubber culti-

vation in India. That is why Indian rubber price is approximately Rs. 2,000 per tonne more than the international prices. Now, on the one hand, the cost is already high. On the other hand, the rubber growers complain that it is not getting them a remunerative price. (*Interruptions*)

The cost cannot be reduced overnight. The labour charges are high in Kerala. Given a high-cost labour given that it is in the private sector, the only way to make our prices competitive is to increase productivity. And we have an approximately Rs. 700 crore plan to increase productivity. If productivity goes up, production per acre will go up and prices will come down. There are no short-cuts.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Export of Onion Seeds

*227. **SHRI CHANDRESH PATEL:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether onion seeds were exported during January 1, 1989 to October 31, 1991;

(b) if so, the places from which these were exported and the quantity and value thereof;

(c) the countries to which the onion seeds were exported and the foreign exchange earned thereby;

(d) whether representations have been received from some organisations from time to time requesting for better price for their produce; and

(e) if so, the precise details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c). Based on Phytosanitary Certificates issued by the Plant Quarantine & Fumigation Stations, a quantity of 792.889 MT onion seeds has been exported from Amritsar, Bombay and Hyderabad during 1.1.1989 to 31.10.1991. Other details of export of onion seeds are not readily available.

(d) and (e). No Sir.

Import of Newsprint from USSR

***228. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Trading Corporation has held any negotiations with USSR for import of newsprint during the current year; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Contracts have been finalised by STC from April to December, 1991 (upto 4th December) for import of 27,830 MTs of standard newsprint from USSR against the Trade Plan provision of 70,000 tons for the calendar year.

As the full quantity provided in the Trade Plan could not be contracted, STC made efforts to secure standard newsprint from USSR outside the Trade Plan. In pursuance of this, STC has signed an MOU on 11.10.91 with a USSR newsprint producing company for import of 40,000 tons of standard newsprint under Counter Trade. Payment of newsprint is to be made in rupees which will be used by the USSR company to import

from India Manufactured goods consisting of consumer goods/food/ engineering/textile/ pharmaceutical items etc. STC is to negotiate in December, 1991 with the USSR unit to finalise the contract including various terms and conditions of price etc. of this transaction.

Export of Raw Cotton

***229. SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY:** Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have been exporting raw cotton to stabilise its prices in the domestic market;

(b) if so, whether the Government have ensured that before releasing quotas of raw cotton for export, the requirements of domestic textile industry are met fully; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) The objectives of releasing quotas for export of raw cotton are stabilisation of prices in the domestic market, provision of remunerative prices to the cotton growers and to maintain India's presence in the International Market as a stable supplier.

(b) and (c). Government's endeavour is to fully meet the requirements of the domestic textile industry before releasing quotas for export of cotton.

Status of Court of Records to MRTPC

***231. SHRI M.V. CHANDRA SHEKARA MURTHY:**
SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD:

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state: